In the Specification: (page and line numbers are based on the PCT specification)

On page 1, please add the following paragraph as the first paragraph of the specification:

This application is a U.S. national stage application of International Application No. PCT/GB00/00238, filed January 27, 2000 (published as WO00/44409 on August 3, 2000) and claims the benefit of priority to NZ 333928 (filed January 27, 1999) and NZ 500190 (filed October 7, 1999). The contents of each of which are hereby incorporated in their entireties.

Please replace the paragraph on page 17, lines 14-18 with the following amended paragraph:

All ODN's were applied at 0.5-1.0 [[mM]] μM final concentration following dose dependent analysis during preliminary experiments covering a range of concentrations from 0.05 [[mM]] μM to 50 [[mM]] μM. General toxicity effects only became apparent with ODN concentrations greater than 10 [[mM]] μM. ODN gel mixtures were prepared from concentrated stock solutions stored at -80 ^{o}C.

Please replace the paragraph on page 20, lines 9-19 with the following amended paragraph:

Oligodeoxynucleotides (ODN's)

Unmodified ODN's were delivered in Pluronic F-127 gel (BASF, Germany) in phosphate buffered saline (PBS). Pluronic gel is liquid at low temperatures (0-4 ^{0}C) and sets at physiological temperatures, and is also a mild surfactant. Unmodified ODN's normally have a half life of approximately 20 min in cells (Wagner, 1994) but the Pluronic gel loading method provides a continual diffusion source, the gel acting as a reservoir Becker et al., (1999)). ODN's specific to connexin 43 were applied, or control random ODN's of similar base composition, at [[2mM]] 2 μM final concentration. Gel only controls were also carried out. ODN's were 30 mers analysed to show that no hairpin looping or homodimerisation should occur.

Please replace the paragraph on page 27, lines 10-24 with the following amended paragraph:

Wistar rats were anaesthetised and their spinal cord exposed. A standard hemisection lesion was then made in the cord and 5 ml of chilled Pluronic gel, containing either antisense or sense ODN's to connexin 43 [[(5mM)]] (5 μM) was placed in the lesion. Applications were made blind. The exposed cord was then recovered and the rat returned to its cage. Some animals were sacrificed at 24 hours whereas others were maintained for 12 days and two months in order to determine the extent of neuronal regeneration and the final size of the lesion. For axonal regeneration studies the rats were anaesthetised and their axons severed prior to their entry site to the spinal cord. A pellet of Horse radish peroxidase (HRP) was placed in the cut in order to retrogradely label the axons over a 24 hour period. Next day the rats were sacrificed and their spinal cords removed and fixed in 2% paraformaldehyde. Cords were then pi-ocessed for cryosectioning and serial longitudinal 8 mm sections were taken through the cords. Sections were then immunostained for either connexins or GFAP along with propidium iodide as a nuclear marker, or processed to reveal the HRP.